I: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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sometimes put on the bow with glue made from boiled skin from the head of a buffalo. Sometimes the bow was without sinew backing and sometimes ornamented by being covered on the back with snake-skin. Bows are said to have been held either horizontally or vertically, according to individual habit. Arrows for war and hunting are said to have been alike.

Shields were made of the thickest part of buffalo-bull skin, which was laid into a hole in the ground and made hard by being scorched with hot rocks placed upon it. It was then provided with a cover of white buckskin fringed with feathers. A man who carried a shield in war sometimes had no other weapon.

It is declared that no tobacco was raised, and that none growing wild was gathered, but that it was obtained from other tribes and from the whites. This is contrary to the practice of the equally non-agricultural Blackfoot, who planted tobacco; but it would seem to accord with the lack of any information obtained from the Arapaho as to tobacco-raising.

DECORATIVE ART.

The present day decorative art of the Gros Ventre is not nearly as strongly developed as that of the Arapaho. There is much less bead-work made, and this hardly ever equals the better work of the Arapaho either in technical or artistic excellence. Quill-embroidery is also found less frequently than among the Arapaho. How far this greater poverty and inferiority of Gros Ventre decorative art are matters of some standing in time is not certain; but it seems probable that there was a difference between the two tribes in this respect, even when they first came into contact with the whites.

It is in accord with this difference that inquiry as to the symbolic or conventional significance of the decorative designs used by the Gros Ventre has been practically without result. While the failure of the Gros Ventre to render such interpretations is due perhaps in large measure to change of mode of life under the influence of civilization, yet it seems that in this respect too there must have been a temperamental difference between the Arapaho and Gros Ventre, even in earlier times; for the Arapaho preserve at least distinguished wrecks of their symbolism, ceremonies, and religious life, while among the Gros Ventre, who are in much less intimate contact with the Americans, these things have vanished, leaving often scarcely a trace, and rarely more than a memory.

Partly on account of comparative scarcity of material, and also by reason of greater artistic poverty, the decoration of the Gros Ventre does not present as many typical characteristics as that of the Arapaho, the Blackfeet, the

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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175 they had been hard put to it recently to ransom thirty warriors
648 from the Crow—probably the wounded who had been abandoned in the panic following the ambush of 1832.[84]

So far as relations with the American traders go, in 1833 and subsequently the Gros Ventres were on their best behavior. Maximilian notes that the very large group of Gros Ventres, whom he met at the Judith River as he traveled with Mitchell of the American Fur Company on their way to Fort McKenzie, were surprisingly well-behaved. He adds, rightly enough, that it was to their self-interest to be so, in the light of the fact that formerly they had suffered with the traders on account of their bad reputation. He further remarks that the Gros Ventres were now known as dressing buffalo robes better than most of the other tribes. After trading a bit with the Gros Ventres where they met them, Mitchell invited them to meet him at Fort McKenzie. When the Gros Ventres arrived there, their chief men were received at the
439 Fort with the same pomp and ceremony as were accorded the
431 Piegan chiefs in the preliminaries to actual trading. The Gros Ventres, too, upheld their end by bringing the usual presents—a horse and some beaver skins—to present to the trader.[85]

This Fort had been established at the mouth of the Marias, very close to the later site of Ft. Benton, and was known first as Fort Piekann and the next year was renamed Fort McKenzie. It had been established at this point for dealing with the Blackfoot groups, especially the Piegan, and the surrounding tribes. At that time the American Fur Company was particularly interested in obtaining beaver skins, and one beaver skin was worth two buffalo robes. Later, as the market for buffalo robes opened up, the beaver gradually lessened in value so that finally two or three beaver skins became the equivalent of one buffalo robe.[86] Lewis has emphasized what the change in market meant for the Blackfoot groups.[87] Relations of the Gros Ventres with the whites improved, and there was a tendency for the Gros Ventres to become more and

[84] Cf. Ewers, 1943, p. 603; Maximilian, pp. 71, 75, 76.
[85] Maximilian, pp. 75–76, 126, 165.
[86] Bradley, p. 203, note on 204.
[87] O. Lewis, pp. 34–59.

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In April, when the sap rises, the Gros Ventres scraped the juice from the inner bark peeled from cottonwood and sometimes even from box-elder. They also chewed the gum from pines. Infusions of cherry bark or roots and peppermint were said to have been drunk as tea, but such concoctions were considered usually more in the nature of medicines.

So long as the Gros Ventres had the buffalo, relatively little in the way of foodstuffs from the white man were imported. Sugar, flour, occasional fresh fruits, coffee and tea were known and used to some extent after about 1855.[10] The possibility of obtaining whiskey, was, however, one of the items which determined the popularity of a given trading place. Incidentally, tobacco was an important item of trade after 1800, although prior to that time the Gros Ventres had raised their own.[11]

Clothing and Adornment

The importance of the buffalo in the economy of the Gros Ventres was as obvious in clothing and in shelter as it was in food. The buffalo robe, dressed with the hair on, was perhaps the most valuable article inasmuch as it was not only a regular part of their garb, but also was the main article of trade with the whites after about 1830. When decorated, it had high prestige value as a gift.

Seldom was the hide of a buffalo older than two years used for robes since the fur of those of greater age was usually scabby even in the fall when the coats were in best condition. It required the skin of a yearling to make a robe for a twelve-year-old, and the skins of calves made robes for smaller children. When the demand of the trade for robes was very great, the large wool blanket sometimes replaced the robe for wearing apparel and for bedding.

Most of the other articles of clothing were made from well-dressed deer, elk and antelope skins.[12] Deer and elk were more

[10] See p. 22.

[11] This tradition is confirmed by Cocking in 1772, who writes, p. 111, "The tobacco they use is their own planting which hath disagreable flavor. I have preserved a specimen." Kroeber's informants denied knowledge of the tradition.

[12] In 1854 Denig, pp. 464-65, describes the cloth bought for clothing for summer and fall wear, but states that a real hunter must have a buffalo robe, moccasins, mittens, cap, skin leggings and an extra buffalo robe.

Feathers, especially eagle feathers were highly prized and red paint, prepared from ochre, as well as other paints obtained through the trader, played their part in bodily decoration. 63 292 237 386

The younger men thought a great deal of their appearance. One of the things they made for themselves was fancy painted sunshade-hats of rawhide. The designs painted thereon had a yellow background against which various other colors stood out. Coming Daylight remarked: "These sunshades looked so fine that the other tribes copied them, just like the whites get their styles from Paris." Long thick hair was the ideal both for men and for women. The tail of the porcupine made an admirable comb. A number of perfumes were used by the young men. The castor of the beaver, for instance, was put in the paint bag so that the material for daily painting would be sweet smelling. Again, young men crushed "Piegan berries," chewed them, and rubbed them on hair, horses, and bedding, as perfume. 282 751 531 302 [237]

Incidentally, according to Coming Daylight, in order to clean their buckskin clothing, the Gros Ventres would wear it into the water, getting it completely wet, and then rub it thoroughly with a certain kind of white clay.[14] She said that the tribe was spoken of by other tribes as always having such nice white clothes, and to this habit of rubbing them with clay she attributes the name by which the Gros Ventres call themselves, *a'aninin*, "white clay people." 296 [101]

Ear-rings, worn both by men and women, were made from imported abalone shell, which they cut up and shaped; they also used a certain type of imported white shell. Many other kinds of necklaces, armlets, and so on were apparently used, but on these we failed to get details. 301 [439]

Household and Transportation

The lodges of the Gros Ventres were made from buffalo hides, the number used in each depending on the size of the lodge. They 342

[14] This custom is mentioned in the sources of the early 19th century. Cf. Harmon, p. 277; Henry, v. 2, p. 734. The latter adds, as a further distinguishing characteristic, that when the Gros Ventres use red "it is always of a light color, inclining to pale vermillion. The dark red or Spanish brown, so much in vogue among the other Meadow tribes, does not suit their taste." [822]

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At this late date it was difficult to obtain in the field details of exchange between the Gros Ventres and the white traders. One such transaction was recalled clearly by Coming Daylight, who remembered it because the amount given in return was relatively large. On this occasion, for 12 buffalo robes, the Gros Ventres received 2 striped blankets, 1 whole sack of sugar, 1 horse. If we compare with Denig's figures for a typical exchange in the 1850's where a horse was worth 10 robes, and 1 white, 3-point blanket was the equivalent of 3 robes,[14] we can agree that this was a good bargain. The same informant, however, remembers another occasion on which she herself gave the robe off her back to a trader in return for some apples which her little daughter craved. We have no figures on the relative value of robes as compared with whiskey, but our data show that whiskey was highly valued by the Gros Ventres.[15]

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So far as we have been able to find out, while the trade with the whites was carried on at every possible opportunity, the amount of intertribal exchange was relatively slight. Perhaps intertribal gambling contests would account for most of it. Coming Daylight remembers, however, one case where a Crow friend of her maternal uncle's offered him a race horse in exchange for elk teeth sufficient to trim a woman's dress. We lack details on other outside exchanges, but our informants mentioned that the Gros Ventres used to obtain abalone shells from the Nez Percé and also occasionally camas roots, but this latter was very rare. Denig mentions the abalone shell was earlier worth $20 (i.e. 6–7 robes), but that when the traders brought in so many their value dropped to $10.[16]

The head of the household was the one who bargained with the trader, but the materials he took in exchange were supposed to have been decided upon in view of the needs of the household as well as his own personal needs. If, for instance, one of his

credited as follows: 30 lbs. of dried meat, 1 robe; 2 red fox skins, 1 robe; 1 large raw elk skin, 1 robe; 12 wolf skins, 4 robes.

[14] Denig, p. 420.

[15] Several of the traders remark that the Gros Ventres did not beg for whiskey as did the Piegan and others, but they were willing to pay for it. See Henry, v. 2, p. 734.

[16] Denig, pp. 590–91.

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value. Thus any object captured from the enemy, no matter how trivial it might be, was more valuable than a duplicate of that same thing obtained in any other way, and could be used to initiate an enemy-friendship, one of the most important of Gros Ventre transactions. A man who gave a horse, rather than or in addition to other items—to establish the enemy-friendship, to pay for the curing of a relative, to someone in honor of his relative, to his ceremonial grandfather for guiding him through the Sacred Dance, to wager in gambling, to show how much he thought of his brother-in-law in return for so simple a gift as the flesh of a puppy—would gain in prestige, for he thus established for himself a reputation for "being somebody."

The amount of labor that went into the making of an object, such as the polished deer-hoof trimming on a robe, was an element in its value. When the robe was old and worn the recipient thereof would remove the fringe and return to the donor "so she could use them again." Scarcity, too, entered into evaluation of goods. Eagle feathers were, for instance, more valuable than other kinds of feathers. Again, as to elk teeth, it was explained: "The elk has only two teeth that are like ivory,[11] and so it takes a long time to accumulate them. They are to us Gros Ventres like pearls are to the whites. They were our greatest decoration. They are valuable even today, and, while imitations are sometimes used, you can always tell the difference."

Exchange and Distribution

There was actually no need for economic exchange within the tribe, with the object of obtaining the necessities of life, but a need had developed for exchange with the fur traders to obtain guns, whiskey, metal objects—kettles, scraper-blades, etc.—cloth, tobacco, beads, paints, and so on. After about 1830, the medium of exchange with traders was the buffalo robe, which rapidly increased in value at the expense of beaver.[12] Traders on the Missouri accepted other items produced by the Indians, but everything was equated in terms of robes.[13]

[11] These are the rudimentary canines. Cf. Seton, v. 3, p. 5.

[12] Bradley, pp. 203–04.

[13] According to Denig, p. 421, an Assiniboine chief on Jan. 8, 1852, was

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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439 wives had vowed to cover a Pipe, undoubtedly he would try to include in his purchases the requisite length of black cloth. Individuals of course differed. In view of their labor, the wives would expect to share in the return therefor which the husband was able to secure from the trader, but this expectation was not always met.[17]

The items thus obtained were consumed by the Gros Ventres in the same ways as those goods of their own manufacture—some being directly consumed, some entering into further production, and some being exchanged on the principle of gifts and of payments for services, and in gambling.

554 431 439 A man would accumulate a surplus only to expend it as generously as possible in order to attain prestige. The person with a reputation for generosity rose in public esteem, and was in turn the recipient of many gifts, whereas the man with only one horse and only one wife could not afford to meet the demands for hospitality and for generosity in other transactions, and thus could not profit by the system of indirect and deferred exchange.

262 574 554 867 Sharing of food was an important element in attaining prestige through generosity. A person known to be stingy with food would lack status. The ideal was often preached to children embodied in such statements as the following: "If you have visitors, even though you don't have much food, give the last of it to them."

574 Should a male visitor drop in unexpectedly, the first thing a man did was to tell his wife to cook and she was expected to comply. How seriously this was regarded may be seen from the following case told by Singer: "One time my husband, Iron Bucket, went with a friend to visit the latter's brother. The sister-in-law was naturally a stingy woman and made no move to feed them. Her husband was sitting there fixing arrows and he told her: 'Hurry and cook. If you have nothing, ask for meat at one of the lodges.' This woman had a big shaggy head and sat there with her head bowed and her husband couldn't make her move. After a while, however, some meat was brought in from hunting, and this woman went out, got it and threw it down hard inside her lodge. She was mad. And instead of giving them in a nice way the manifolds and liver that they ordinarily eat first, she slung

[17] For a case in point, see p. 178.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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G 533 singers: Tom Bad Road, Charlie Arms, Mrs. Katie Matt Croft, and Mrs. Albert Perry. Apropos of the last two, it may be added that women frequently sang and sing with the men, and the latter "like it when the women join in because this makes the singing colorful and nice."[3]

G 386 The Gros Ventres used many kinds of paint; some of Indian, some of white man origin; some in secular, some only in ritual uses. Powdered paints of different colors were gotten from traders and were used to paint parfleches and, by the men, alone, never by the women, to paint their bodies. A yellow paint was also gotten from the Cheyenne or from Cheyenne territory. On one occasion Coming Daylight brought a lot of this yellow paint which she had gathered there and gave enough of it to a Gros Ventre man to paint his big lodge with it. These paints were not sacred. A black paint, obtained from the Standing Rock region, was used in making fine lines on parfleches. Only the old women who made and painted the parfleches were the ones that gathered it, but it was not so sacred as the red paint used in face painting.

G 788 386 [778] This sacred red face paint was in a class by itself, and was used in the Flat and Feathered Pipe rites, by the "grandfathers" in painting the wives during the Sacred Lodge rites, and apparently by the women in everyday painting of their own and the children's faces.[4] This special red paint was called, as also the yellow clay

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[3] About 1900 The Boy went along with the Gros Ventres on a 4th of July visit to the Piegan at Browning. All four groups, the Piegan, Blood, Blackfeet proper, and northern Piegan, were gathered there. In all the four there was only one man, a famous singer, who knew all the ceremonial dance songs, although some of the other Indians knew some of them, and he was imported by the Browning Piegan for the reason. The Boy heard him sing. The man did not have a nice clear voice, but he lived up to his reputation, for he knew the songs and their order for all the many rites and was kept busy all the time. And he cashed in handsomely with horses, blankets and money. He was able to make a living from his singing. The Boy learned some of the songs this man sang, and he sang one of them for us, that had the words: "You who are the ruler of all sacred (powerful) things having to do with all life, give me all of that so that I may use it all my life." The Blackfeet, The Boy added, think more of the Sun than do the Gros Ventres: it is their deity.

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[4] See Flannery, 1953, pp. 144-45.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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"glistening" [no doubt, highly polished], very dark grey or greyish brown stone, with three or four humps on the upper surface of the stone stem part. Our informants, who had seen the Pipe, disagreed as to whether there are feathers on the Pipe itself, and one of them stated that it had looked different to him on the two occasions he had seen it.

In the Pipe bundle were many other sacred objects besides the Pipe itself. Most of these had their separate wrappings or cases, the Pipe itself being wrapped in buffalo hair. The first keeper, according to Garter Snake, wrapped the Pipe itself in a bit of white buffalo skin. The outermost wrapping of the Pipe bundle was, originally at least, of tanned elkskin, tied around with four strings. There was also, again originally at least, a bear robe cover for the bundle.[4]

The Pipe bundle would shake and quiver when there was going to be an earthquake. The keeper could then predict that the earthquake would occur soon, although he could not predict the exact time. Not so long ago Cora Chandler's old aunt saw the bundle quiver, and sure enough that summer an earthquake occurred.

Informants consistently agreed that there were four main things in the bundle, and that two of the four were the Pipe itself and the carved stone face.[5] Most of them included the feathered stick among the four. As to whether the fourth was the whistle, the owl, or the crane, there was considerable conflict of opinion, a conflict we were unable to clear up.

The feathered stick, from which the Pipe itself derived its name,

[4] Dr. Hagener noted at the 1951 opening that the innermost wrapping of the whole bundle was of "old bison leather" and the outer wrapping of modern cloth." [R.F.]

[5] Dr. Hagener stated in letter of Jan. 18, 1954, "The pipe displayed in the pictures [Plate 3, C and D] was not the chief pipe of the bundle (that having mysteriously disappeared). It was however made of the red stone commonly traded from the Minnesota area. Although there were other pipes in the bundle this was the only one we were permitted to see. Iron Man checked on the presence of other pipes by feeling inside the leather casings, but did not bring them out." Under date of Aug. 8, 1954, Dr. Hagener remarked: "Dr. Nitz was of the opinion that there were two somewhat similar pipes in the bundle, one of which had disappeared. The picture . . . is of the remaining one." [R.F.]